

Serial No. 10/798,123Docket No. 34916-CIPRemarks:

Claims 24-28 remain for consideration in this application. In view of the claims as they now stand, together with the remarks hereunder, the rejections of the last Action are respectfully traversed.

Previous claims 24-26 were rejected on the basis of the so-called admitted prior art, together with the newly cited reference to Davidson et al. The latter describes a multiple-socket extension cord in the form of a reel having an electrical cord wound thereon, and a multiple-socket connector 20 coupled with the wound cord. Additionally, the reference described an electrical cord 27 having male ends.

While the Applicant could take issue with the rationale of the rejection, she has instead elected to amend independent method claim 24 to unambiguously distinguish the art, however considered or construed. In particular, claim 24 now calls for an electrical coupling step involving provision of an overall electrical connection assembly having male plugs at both ends thereof, such overall connection assembly comprising a first electrical connector having an elongated cord with first electrical connector male plugs at both ends of the cord. Additionally, the claimed first electrical connector has an elongated jacket disposed about the elongated cord, with the cord and jacket being relatively shiftable.

The claim goes on to recite the steps of first positioning the jacket over the first electrical connector male plug remote from the claimed female connection end of the light string, followed by inserting the adjacent end of the overall connection assembly into the female connection end. Next, the claim calls for repositioning the jacket about the other first electrical connector male plugs

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proximal to the female receptacle of the light string, and thereupon inserting the other male connection plug of the overall electrical connection assembly into the outlet.

It will be appreciated from a study of the specification that the overall electrical connection assembly can be made up of only the first electrical connector (as called for in new claim 28), or can be made up of the first electrical connector coupled with a conventional extension cord (as recited in claim 25).

Claim 24 has also been amended to delete the Markush group from the first paragraph; this has been relegated to new dependent claim 27 and is believed proper inasmuch as amended claim 24 is clearly patentable in the absence of this limitation. Also, the last paragraph of claim 24 has been slightly amended for clarity to simply recite that the "electrical coupling" step is carried out while the string remains in the reverse wrapped orientation.

This claimed method is clearly supported in the specification. For example, the claimed first electrical connector including a double-male electrical cord with a jacket disposed about the cord between the opposed male connection ends is illustrated in Figs. 7a and 7b. Moreover, the steps of alternately positioning the jacket over the male plugs during use is described on pages 7 and 8 of the specification.

The use of a first electrical connector as claimed is an important feature in that it provides a high degree of safety to the user. Thus, and referring to exemplary Figs. 7a and 7b, the jacket is first positioned rightwardly in Fig. 7a, exposing male plug 14 and allowing it to be inserted into the female connection end of a light string. Thereafter, the plug is repositioned leftwardly to thereby expose plug 16 which can then be inserted into an electrical socket or extension cord.

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The claimed method is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the art. Davidson et al. makes no provision for any such connection arrangement with a shiftable jacket as presently recited. The previously cited patent to Epps is likewise deficient and in any case is no longer being used against the present claims. Finally, the admitted prior art fails to even suggest the use of a double-male plug cord, and is even less pertinent to the presently amended claims.

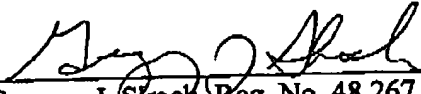
In short, even if all of the art of record is indiscriminately combined, the presently claimed method is in no way taught or suggested.

Applicant and her attorneys would like to thank the Examiner for her time and courtesies. At that time, the presently submitted claim 24 was discussed in detail, and certain minor modifications were agreed upon to improve the readability of the claim. At the conclusion of the interview, it was agreed that the claim distinguished the art of record, but that a supplemental search was necessary.

In view of the foregoing, a Notice of Allowance appears to be in order and such favorable action is solicited.

Any additional fee which is due in connection with this amendment should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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